proposed to be replaced by the end of the 12th Plan, as these helicopters are old and inadequate for the present operational requirements. Also, Advanced Light Helicopters are being gradually inducted in the Indian Army for light utility roles. The Indian Air Force utilizes Cheetah, Mi-17 / Mi-17 IV and Advanced Light Helicopters for operating at high altitude and low temperatures. Government constantly reviews the security environment and accordingly decides to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness.

Procurement of unedible masoor dal by Army

894. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN :
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT :
SHRI AJAY MAROO :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently a court of inquiry has found that last year the Indian Army had procured around 1000 metric tonnes of "masoor dal", which was unfit for human consumption and that some officials were found guilty of ignoring quality-control specifications and changing the tendering process to benefit the supplier, thereby causing a net loss of rupees four crore to the exchequer; and

(b) if so, the details of the major findings/observations contained in the inquiry report and the action taken/proposed of be taken thereon, as well as the fresh steps initiated for foolproof and transparent deals?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):(a) and (b) A Count of Inquiry was ordered by the Army Headquarters to investigate into irregularities relating to procurement of dry rations. The court of Inquiry found certain omission/lapses in the functioning and discharge of duties by various functionaries with respect to provisioning and supply of masoor whole, kabuli chana, barely crushed and gram kibbled. The competent authority has directed disciplinary action against six army officers and one junior commissioned officer (JCO) and administrative action against four other officers.

Raksha Udyog Ratna to private companies

†895. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is going to honour the private sector companies with the title of "Raksha Udyog Ratna";

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the percentage of the dependency of the country in the field of defence on indigenous production at present; and

(c) what are the schemes to promote indigenisation of defence production in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The Ministry of Defence has notified the procedure for selection of Tier-1 Indian industries in the private sector, which will be treated at per with Defence PSUs in terms of the provisions of Defence Procurement Procedure—2005. Such private industries have been named as "Raksha Udyog Ratnas".

(b) About 74% of the total procurement of defence products was made through indigenous sources during the year 2005-2006.

(c) Defence Research & Development Organisation is mandated to promote indigenization of defence items through research and development in Defence. In addition, there are schemes for grant of awards for excellence for the industry for promotion of indigenization of defence production. Apart from this, there is a constant effort on the part of Department of Defence Production and Service HQrs to encourage indigenization of components, assemblies and sub-assemblies etc.

Name of regiment after Himachal Pradesh

896. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that maximum soldiers and other ranks join Armed Forces and other para militaries from Himachal Pradesh, but so far no regiment of the State has been created by Government; and

(b) if so, by when Government propose to establish the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) There is no proposal to raise a separate Himachal Regiment.

Operation Sadbhavana

897. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Army is conducting Operation Sadbhavana in Kashmir Valley;